

CDS Code 4469823 Santa Cruz High School District
PLANNING GRANT FOR THE NORTH COAST CHARTER SCHOOL
ABSTRACT

This Planning grant proposes a fundamentally different kind of education for 7th and 8th grade students than is currently available to the children residing in the area of northern Santa Cruz county that comprises Pacific and Bonny Doon School Districts. Both are small one-school districts offering only K-6 programs. Rural families know the value of self-reliance as well as the importance of networking to enable them to live so far out. For most, this is a choice, but for some families, it is the only way they can afford to live in Santa Cruz county. After 6th grade the children must be transported daily into the city of Santa Cruz to attend a traditional junior high.

Pacific School's program emphasizes preparing the child for life and dedicated to addressing the needs of the whole child by creating a school environment wherein every child may experience success in his or her social or academic growth. The program uses the real-life situations of the Life Lab garden and Food Lab nutrition programs to provide students with practical use of basic skills and knowledge.

The vision of the North Coast charter school is to take this model one-step further and create a learning environment using the farm as a model. Our philosophy is based on research and the belief that children of this age and grade level require an active exploratory environment.

Collaboration and networking is integral to the plan for developing and maintaining the charter school. At every step of the process, stakeholders will participate in the planning and creation of the school. From the beginning, students, parents, business and community members will plan the curriculum, develop the business and administrative plans, and participate in expanding our network of partners. The farm will provide the students the opportunity to apply basic skills and knowledge to practical, life experiences.

The planning grant funds will be used to plan and develop North Coast Charter school's, charter, curriculum, business plan and legal fees associated with the establishment of the non-profit corporation of the charter school.

The developers of this project are prepared to demonstrate accountability for all aspects of the project, reporting to the school district and the CDE as required by the California Education Code and this planning grant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Charter School Grant Application Cover Sheet.....	Page 1
Abstract of Proposal.....	Page 2
Table of Contents.....	Page 3
Application Narrative.....	Page 4
Budget Sheet: Appendix F.....	Page 14
Budget Sheet Narrative.....	Page 15
Application Checklist: Appendix C.....	Page 16

I. The Charter School's Educational Vision

A. Baseline Information about the School

During the past six months a parent's group from Pacific Elementary School in Davenport and Bonny Doon Elementary School, respectively single unit school districts, has been researching the feasibility and interest in creating a junior high 7th and 8th grade charter school on the rural North Coast as an alternative to sending their children to a large overcrowded junior high in the city of Santa Cruz. The group developed a questionnaire and conducted a survey of the parents and students in the two districts. The results from that survey indicate that there is sufficient interest to justify a continued examination for developing a charter school for a junior high in our area.

The parents formed a Vision and Mission Committee to formulate and approve a vision statement together with the goals and objectives for a charter school for 7th and 8th grades and to explore ways to make it happen.

Pacific Elementary School and Bonny Doon Elementary School are both graded K-6 schools located in rural communities on Santa Cruz's North Coast. Our school districts serve the communities residing in the Western Watershed of the Santa Cruz mountains South of the San Mateo County line to the Santa Cruz city limits. It holds some of the most remote and rugged terrain in the county. Children who attend these two schools spend the first seven years of their education among the huge redwoods or surrounded by agricultural flat land at the coast.

The families in the Pacific School district represent a wide range in economic status and cultural and ethnic diversity. During the 1997-98 school year at Pacific Elementary 13.6% are Hispanic, 2.5% are Filipino, 1.2% are Black and 82.7% are White. Economically, 22 out of 84 students or 26% qualify for Title I funds to receive free or subsidized lunches. The school has identified 29 learning disabled children and 6 children who are gifted and talented. Occupationally, families run a gamut of work from farmers, farm laborers and seasonal workers to many who engage in the construction trades, lumber mill employees, artisans, and professional workers who use the North Coast as a bedroom community to commute to Santa Cruz, San Jose and San Francisco. Culturally, many families who have moved and live here have done so to escape the confusion and problems of living in large urban areas. Their life styles reflect a return to the land, and a more quiet and private existence. Living in isolation and a distance from city resources fosters self reliance, and independence. For the large Hispanic Community living in the village of Davenport and on the surrounding farms and work houses, there is a strong feeling of cultural heritage and connection to the community and the school. The Davenport Resource Center and Pacific School serve as the important support organizations.

Bonny Doon School District has 233 students in their K-6 program. Ethnically, during the 1997-98 school year approximately 95% of the children are white, 2% are Hispanic,

1% Black and 1% Asian. In a 1996-97 safe schools assessment by Bonny Doon classroom teachers shows approximately 17% of students K-6 are at-risk in areas of academic, social and/or emotional deficiencies. Four per cent of the student population qualify for low income services and 10% qualify for free or subsidized lunches. Bonny Doon is an isolated, rural homogeneous community. Situated in a densely wooded redwood forest, homes are spread out over a large geographic area. There are no commercial businesses. Families of the children who attend the school, work in the construction trades, are artisans, farmers, seasonal workers and professionals who use Bonny Doon as a bedroom community and commute to work.

Pacific Elementary School's educational program emphasis is upon preparing the child for life and is dedicated to addressing the needs of the whole child by creating a school environment wherein every child may experience success in his or her social and academic growth. Pacific School's curriculum goal is to provide a balanced curriculum structured to meet individual needs. The integrated curriculum includes language arts, mathematics, history, science, social science, physical education, visual and performing arts and geography.

The school has four classrooms that are multi-graded. The student's work is evaluated by written assessments from the teachers and are shared with parents with a minimum of two conferences during the school year. Students also perform a self assessment twice yearly.

Pacific School has a strong agricultural and nutritional program called Life Lab and Food Lab that integrates nutrition and natural science lessons with gardening activities. Since 1983 children from 1st to 6th grades have worked in the garden and learned how to plan and plant in cycles. The Food Lab is offered to children in 4th-6th grades in which the children plan and prepare student lunches on a daily basis. Produce from the life lab is utilized together with other food sources.

Other elements of the curriculum are:

- An Environmental Living History Program that the 4th-6th grades participate in. By creating a unique opportunity to “turn back the clock” and relive history at historic sites, the program integrates extensive classroom preparation with overnight stays where the children take on the roles of notable historic figures of the 19th Century
- The Computer Program integrates with the core curriculum combining technological literacy with support of classroom learning.
- The Instrumental Music Program offers the 3rd-6th grade children the opportunity to study either marimba or violin.
- The S.P.E.C.T.R.A. project enhances the art program by providing professional artists, poets, mimes, actors, and craftsmen as workshop leaders that visit the school and share their talents and crafts with all the children.
- The Town Full of Readers Program encourages young readers to develop reading skills and a love of literature.
- In the Enrichment Program, each classroom participates in research trips that relate to the curriculum.
- The Resource Specialist Program provides assistance for children whose learning disabilities necessitate additional help with reading, writing, spelling and language development.
- The Miller-Unruh Reading Program provides extra help with reading and language skills for K-2nd grades.
- The Gifted and Talented Education Program is aimed at providing enrichment for those students who need stimulation in addition to the regular classroom curriculum for grades 3rd-6th.
- Pacific School has the services of a speech and language therapist, and a psychologist.
- After school art classes and parenting and fitness classes for adults round out the educational program at Pacific School.

The development of self-esteem is an important goal at Pacific School. Each child can develop his or her own potential and enthusiasm for learning. Children learn to cooperate and take responsibility for their actions. They learn to function with a sense of community while maintaining their individuality and developing their ability for creative self-expression. Children are treated with kindness and respect and learn to respect others and to develop self-discipline.

At Bonny Doon School the curriculum stresses the basic academic areas and addresses the social and emotional needs of children. There are currently eleven classrooms and one

Home-School room. Many classrooms are multi-graded. Garden areas are used by the children to plant flowers and vegetables.

B. Educational Vision

The vision our committee has developed originates from an emphasis on practical exercises which will help the whole child understand the role he or she will play in preparation for being an adult in the 21st Century. The model we have created for our 7th and 8th grade junior high is that of an experiential based farm school where the children plant and grow vegetables which at harvest would be sold at market. Both elementary schools currently have strong agricultural programs which integrates nutrition and natural science lessons with gardening activities. The charter school will continue the style of education utilized by our partner Pacific School. We will build upon and expand the model of the Life Lab and Food Lab experience to give the children the experience of the farm to market process and the application of the basic skills to that process. We will continue the strong art and music programs that we have emphasized in the elementary grades. The computer and the expansion of computer-based learning will be taught. The philosophy of our charter school is based on research and on the belief that children of this age and grade level require an active exploratory learning environment. Allowing students to do it for themselves enables them to move toward becoming independent learners, with the added benefit that this approach offers a wide diversity of student learning styles and instructional strategies. It allows children to have guided choices and a greater range of learning experiences.

It is the goal of the school to increase learning and student outcomes by nurturing independent, self reliant and self-motivated children who have the ability to work in groups to accomplish a common goal to complete a project. Children will develop an appreciation for a lifelong love of learning and the ability to become self educated. They will become problem solvers critical thinkers and have the ability to “think outside the box”. Emphasis will also be to provide services for the limited-English proficient students and children who are at risk for a variety of reasons.

Learning by doing involves placing emphasis on an active instructional approach. It differs from the mainstream public school which is focused on a text book uses and rote memorization as the instructional technique. In our charter model, it will be the goal that children spend more time in nature exploring and interacting with their environment. There are many opportunities for the children to discover their world for themselves.

The school’s goals and outcomes are a crucial component of the accountability system as well. In addition to including student performance, our charter school’s goals will be to see that qualifications are met by teachers teaching in the school, that there are ongoing professional development activities for teachers, that there are continued efforts to identify at risk children to ensure future success and reduce the dropout rate, and to constantly evaluate the quality of the instructional materials. Additionally, the degree that students are the focus of the work of the school and the degree to which innovation is encouraged

in achieving the desired results are important goals of the school.

The junior high school will be small at its inception as the number of 6th grade graduation students from Pacific School and Bonny Doon schools number approximately 35 to 40 each year and it is likely that many parents will elect to send their children to the large junior high in the City of Santa Cruz. Children entering 7th grade in the public or private schools in Santa Cruz will also be eligible to enroll in the school. We will also recruit students from outside the two districts should we have the capacity and resources to do so.

Lastly, an important part of our goals is concerned with environmental and quality of living issues. As both Bonny Doon and Davenport are remote geographical areas, fewer resources (gas) would be expended in basing a junior high school in the immediate area, which will keep our environment cleaner and conserving our precious resources. Time in transporting our children to Santa Cruz would also be saved. Unfortunately, county bus schedules do not run conveniently or frequently enough to service our public schools and many parents make two trips into Santa Cruz each day to drop off and pick up their children.

II. Description of Grant Project Goals and Activities for Approval of a Charter Proposal

A. Grant Project Goals and Objectives

The goals of the grant project will be to explore the interest, need and commitment parents and students have to create a charter school for the 7th and 8th grades on the North Coast of Santa Cruz. Included in this will be to identify a group of parents, community business, civic and educational leaders willing to devote the time and work necessary in researching, developing and refining the current philosophy and vision of the charter school as put forth by the parent developers.

Grant money will be used to hire consultants, legal counsel and appropriate professionals including a teacher to work with parents and community business and civic leaders on curriculum development and corresponding activities, in creating innovative teaching approaches and methods of achieving measurable student outcomes and on addressing governance issues and compliance requirements.

The goals will be to develop a business organization which will be able to manage the day to day affairs of the school, establish the rules and procedures, hire teachers and staff, propose a viable budget for the first year of operation and project an overall five year plan and budget for the school. Another important task will be to identify a location for the school by working closely with parents, businesses, and the community.

Exploring community resources for school structures, facilities, services and maintenance of those facilities will be another important aspect of the project goals. We will focus strongly on building partnerships with parents, students, policymakers and legislators, the district, business leaders and community organizations and tap in on their expertise, advise and financial assistance where possible.

The objectives of the grant project will be that parents and the community will write a charter school petition in accordance with Senate Bill 1448 incorporating the 14 basic elements of a Charter School. We will have developed a strong, unique and innovative curriculum that embodies our vision and philosophy. A curriculum will have been created which will improve student learning and will have expanded the learning opportunities for students who are identified as academically low achieving, special needs and gifted. The curriculum will support teachers in utilizing different and innovative instructional methods. We will have in place a system for measuring pupil outcomes by meeting the statewide performance standards developed by the California State Department of Education and achieving district developed standards appropriate for age levels, content areas and outcomes. We will be able to identify additional outcomes which reflect the instructional program and goals of our charter school and charter. We will also be able to assess pupil progress that will be supported by State and/or District testing as well as having developed a system for measuring our objectives and goals outlined in our curriculum.

Another objective of the grant project will be that the parents and community will have established how our board will govern. We will have our first year budget and a five-year planned budget and a projection on how we want to grow. We will have a site for our school and a plan for how we will develop school structures, facilities, services and how we will manage them.

B. Identification of Planning Needs for the Development of an Effective School.

1. Our plans for developing the educational capacity of the North Coast Charter School include:

- Hire a “master” teacher as a consultant to facilitate and guide the curriculum development team.
- The team shall be comprised of representatives of each of the charter school stakeholder groups: Teacher, student, parent, university/college intern, community and business members.
- This team will identify the best practices of experiential learning models for students, ages 11 to 14 by research, interviews with seventh and eighth grade teachers, and collaborating with the neighboring universities and colleges.
- The team will develop a curriculum specific to the educational and sociological needs of the seventh and eighth grader. It will emphasize incorporating basic academic skills of science, math, health, language arts, and fine arts into real life experiences using the farm as a laboratory for life.
- Curriculum content standards will meet or exceed the requirements measured by the state wide assessment program (AB 265). Measurable outcomes that reflect the vision and goals of North Coast School’s charter will be developed.
- Students will be evaluated upon admission to the school to establish a baseline of knowledge, skill and learning needs related to the curriculum. Evaluation by the teaching staff will be on-going throughout the school year to identify progress and areas still needing improvement. The students’ progress will be measured by teacher written assessments, parent-teacher conferences. At the end of each school term, students will be assessed using California Department of Education-approved standardized periodic testing (AB 265).
- From the curriculum will be derived a list of educational foci that the school’s teacher(s), support staff, and volunteers will seek to develop expertise in through continuing education and advanced studies as appropriate.
- There will be an on-going professional development program at the school, involving student interns from the neighboring universities and Cabrillo College.

2. Our plans for developing the Business and Organizational Management Capacity of the North Coast Charter School include:

- Establishing an Administrative Team comprised of representatives of each of the charter school stakeholder groups: A teacher, student, parent, university/college intern, community and business members. A member of Pacific School Board of Trustees has agreed to be a member of the team.
- Identifying best practices for administration and fiscal soundness through research,

- interviews with other charter school administrations, and collaborating with our educational, community and business partners.
- Drafting the administrative and business operational components of the school charter and collaborating with the curriculum team and superintendent of our sponsoring district to finalize the charter before seeking approval of the sponsoring school board.
 - Developing a five year school plan that includes the budget for the first year of implementation, to submit along with the charter. The business plan will also address the particular aspects of California's public school financing system, including the specialized reports that generate the ADA apportionment and applications for categorical funds to which North Coast Charter School is entitled.
 - Developing the administrative policies and procedures for governance and employment practices.
 - Determining and contracting for a school site that will accommodate classroom and office space, as well as the farm location. Working with the curriculum team and our community and business partners, the administrative team will plan and begin preliminary implementation for the development of the school site, including the furnishings, equipment, and supplies.
 - Developing a process whereby our partners are acknowledged for their contributions and educated to the value this partnership has for them. As an example, a UCSC student could be assigned to North Coast as an intern and in the process receives valuable teaching experience.
 - A professional development financing program for the teaching staff will be developed and funded through the charter school budget. Teachers involved in the project will be encouraged to apply to the Council for Basic Education (CBE) for scholarships and or fellowships to seek financial support to develop the curriculum and the educational assessment standards for the charter school.
 - Using the Planning Grant funds to develop the educational capacity, business capacity, and our collaborative/network capacity.
 - Hire a "master" teacher to guide curriculum development team in the development of the educational plan and learning curriculum.
 - Provide start-up funds for developing the business plan and legal fees associated with setting up the non-profit corporation.
 - Fund initial marketing and promotion of the charter school to potential business and community partners
3. Collaboration and Networking are key components in this plan for the development of the North Coast Charter school.
- Integral to this process is the participation of all stakeholder groups at every level. Both the curriculum and administrative teams shall be comprised of parents, students, educators, business and community members. Ad Hoc teams will be

- comprised of individuals with expertise in the area of focus. An example of an ad hoc team would be the school site procurement team, comprised of a teacher, farmer, real estate agent, and a contractor.
- All plans, including the charter itself, shall be based on best practices identified through research, bench-marking, and the collective experience of the members and our partners.
 - Throughout this planning phase, as valued resources and potential partners are encountered, they will be invited to become a partner, thus expanding our network of collaborators and resources for the school.
 - Members of the teams will meet with and market our collaboration with businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations throughout the north coast and Monterey Bay area.
 - Hold public meetings at the neighboring elementary schools to educate students, parents and community members about North Coast School
 - Make presentations to meetings of local professional and charitable organizations.
 - Make presentations to boards of directors of corporations who may be willing to partner with or sponsor school with technical support.
 - Develop procedure for administering budget, managing payroll, and other financial and accountability operations with our sponsoring districts' administration.
4. Overall Program Evaluation will be determined by a comprehensive assessment program which will be developed as the first order of business for the Charter School Planning teams.
- A project manager will be selected by the group and will be responsible for coordinating the teams and assuring project goals are accomplished on time. The project manager is the group's choice as facilitator for conflict resolution and the official champion of the North Coast Charter School..
 - The Pre-operations Start-up Check List (appendix E of the Charter School Development Guide) will be used to guide the planning process of North Coast Charter School. It will be the tool against which the progress of the planning phase is measured.
- ï Responsibilities and tasks will be assigned to members or sub-teams of both teams as appropriate. The project manager will update the district superintendent on the progress of the plan at agreed upon intervals and present progress reports to the district board of trustees when requested.

C. Support for Getting the Charter Petition Circulated and Approved

1. Specific Activities and Work to Be Done.

- The curriculum team will draft the educational components of the charter. The educational team will address elements I through III of the fourteen required elements of a charter.
- The administrative team will draft the administrative, fiscal and employment practice components of the charter, including the remaining required elements.
- The entire project team will review the initial drafts and finalize the document.
- The final document will be reviewed by the district superintendent for compliance with the charter requirements
- Once the charter is ready for review and public comment it will be presented to the students and parents of students planning to attend North Coast Charter School in the Fall of 1999 and our business and community partners.
- At the end of the public comment period the charter will be submitted to the district's board of trustees for approval.
- Seventh and eighth students will be recruited to enroll in North Coast Charter School for the Fall of 1999 program.
- A promotional brochure will be distributed at both Bonny Doon and Pacific School.
- A presentation about the school and its unique educational opportunities will be presented to the residents of both Davenport and Bonny Doon.
- Information on how to enroll will be included in the presentations to business and community groups.
- A press release will be sent to local newspapers, TV, and radio stations whenever a major milestone has been reached. For example, a press release will be sent when there is to be a ceremony dedicating the school site.

2. Justification for use of Grant Funds.

- The North Coast Charter School is expected to be initially small, with only one certified teacher to approximately 25-30 students the first year. The Planning Grant funds will be used to develop the educational capacity, business capacity, and our collaborative/network capacity.
- Hire "master" teacher to guide the curriculum development team in the development of the educational plan and learning curriculum. Also to write the outcomes and the assessment criteria for determining when the goal has been met.
- Provide start-up funds for developing the business plan and legal fees associated with setting up the non-profit corporation and contracting with a local property owner for a school site.
- Provide funding for incidental, secretarial and supply costs associated with the development of a project of this size.
- fund initial marketing and promotion of the charter school to potential business

and community partners

III. Self Assessment and Procedures for Monitoring Progress Towards Completion of the Charter Proposal.

- Both the curriculum and administrative teams will utilize research and benchmark data gathered during the initial development of all three capacities. We will compare our work to the best practices we identified as important for inclusion in our own program.
- The curriculum team will draft the educational components of the charter. The educational team will address elements I through III of the fourteen required elements of a charter.
- The administrative team will draft the administrative, fiscal and employment practice components of the charter, including the remaining required elements.
- A timeline for completion of major milestones has been included as Attachment A. A more detailed timeline will be developed during the initial planning phase.
- The procedure for evaluating the quality of work will be to collaborate with professional educators and business people to utilize their expertise and experience. Also we will compare our charter plan to the charters of successful charter schools to identify and incorporate any crucial areas not covered.
- To insure that this charter plan adheres to the requirements of the grant, meeting attendance and proceedings will be recorded. The original minutes and copies of all handouts will be remanded to the project manager within 48 hours. The project manager will retain all documentation pertaining to the grant process until it can be stored at the school site. It will be kept available during the grant period and for a full 5 years after the final grant payment.
- The project manager will submit two written progress reports and meet with grant administrators at a designated time and location at least twice during the grant project period.
- The north Coast Charter School project team agrees to meet all of the federal requirements of the federal law governing the Public Charter Schools Program and any applicable state requirements.
- The project manager will consult the district superintendent or the CDE on matters related to compliance with the grant requirements.
- The grant money will be spent according to the attached budget Attachment B.

California Public Charter Schools Grant Program Appendix F
Budget Sheet and Narrative - Proposed Expenditures

Developer's Name: **Andrea Tischler** School's Name: **North Coast Charter School**
CDS Code: **4469823**

Account Codes	Description of Expenditure	Grant funds	Other Funds
1000 series Cert. Salaries			
	Superintendent of School District		500.00
1111	Teacher	29858.00	
subtotal		29858.00	500.00
2000 series Clas. Salaries			
2322	Administrative Support from School District	1799.00	
subtotal		1799.00	
3000 series Empl. Benefits			
3100	Teacher Benefits		2463.00
3400	Health and Welfare		3472.00
33-3600	Federal and State	2000.00	914.00
subtotal		2000.00	6849.00
4000series books, supplies			
4300	Instructional Materials	500.00	
4500	General Office Supplies and Postage		1000.00
subtotal		500.00	1000.00
5000 series Services			
5100	Contract for Consultants,		3000.00
5400	Internet Service, Testing Service, Fingerprinting	200.00	600.00
5500	Insurance and Liability		2000.00
5800	Legal Fees, Attorney Fees		3000.00
subtotal		200.00	8600.00
6000 series Capital Outlay			
6200	Building Lease		6000.00
6400	Instructional Equipment (2 computers and a printer)		5000.00
subtotal			11000.00
Total		34357.00	27949.00

Budget Narrative

The North Coast Charter School project team has determined that a total of **\$62306.00** to plan and be ready to implement the school in September 1999. We have set a schedule of 15 months for completion, beginning July 1, 1998. The primary resources for the project are the project manager and a certified teacher with a BA +45 units and approximately 6 years experience teaching at this grade level or expertise in teaching using experiential-based learning models. The project manager plans to serve pro Bonn, but the team recognizes that it is unreasonable to expect a teacher to donate a year of his or her time to this project. We anticipate that the major expenditure for the project will be the teacher salary and benefits. The grant funds will be used to pay the teacher salary and some of the benefits. The remaining benefits will be funded by other sources, principally raised through donations.

The charter project manager and teacher will need to consult with the district superintendent monthly and as needed to apprise him of the progress and consult with him on other issues. Mr. Nelson anticipates that these minimum encounters will be **\$500** in consultation fees. The school district will be reimbursed for administrative time taken to manage payroll, purchase orders, and other accounting tasks. This **\$1799.00** has been budgeted to come from the grant fund.

An additional **\$500** for instructional materials, as well as **\$200** for internet access to link the project team to CDE and the planning grant web page as well as initial access to the many research sites identified in Appendix A. Included in the \$200 allotted for services is the mandatory fingerprinting of new employees.

The project team has identified that should this grant be funded, we will still face the task of raising **\$27949** to finance this endeavor. Second most important task of the administrative team will be to begin marketing North Coast Charter school as a fundamentally different school. This is a unique opportunity for business and community members on the north coast and neighboring communities to get behind a worthwhile cause which will benefit many in the years to come.